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De Sarijs-handschriften. Studie naar een groep laat-middeleeuwse handschriften uit de IJsselstreek (voorheen toegeschreven aan de Agnietenberg bij Zwolle).

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Summary

This study deals with a group of some 60 manuscripts formerly attributed to St Agnietenberg near Zwolle, a monastery of Canons Regular of the Windesheim Congregation. The manuscripts can be dated c.1470-1490. In this book they are referred to as the 'Sarijs manuscripts', after a misspelt saint's name in the calendar that nearly all manuscripts share.

Their earlier localization having proved untenable, the origin of this rather large group once again became a subject for investigation. This investigation is here carried out, and in addition this book focuses on the exact composition of the group. By studying, for each manuscript, three different aspects, an attempt is made to determine which are the binding elements and, on the other hand, to what extent differentiations within the group can be made. The aspects studied are: the construction and lay-out of the text-block (the codicological aspect); the texts included in the manuscripts (the contents aspect); and the decoration (the iconographic and stylistic aspects).

The book's organization reflects this scheme. Chapters 1 and especially 6 treat the question of the origin of the manuscripts; in addition, chapter 1 includes a brief introduction to the social and spiritual environment in which the manuscripts were in all probability produced, viz. that of the Modern Devotion (1.3).

In chapter 2 various codicological aspects are considered: the lay-out of the pages (2.1), the construction of the quires (2.2), the script and the writing hands (2.3) and the contemporary bindings (2.4).

Chapter 3 deals with the textual issues. Besides an introduction to the predominant type of book within the group, the Book of Hours (3.1), and an account of the various prayers that occur (3.2), a discussion is offered of two separate texts that occur in nearly all manuscripts of the group: the Calendar and the Litany of the Saints (respectively 3.3 and 3.4). Moreover, a little known redaction of the Penitential Psalms is considered in some detail (3.5).

Chapters 4 and 5 contain a discussion of the decorative aspects. The iconography and style of the figurative illumination are examined in chapter 4. After an introduction considering the iconographical programme in Dutch Books of Hours in general (4.0), the iconographical programme in the Sarijs manuscripts is more closely ana-

lyzed (4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). The chapter ends with a discussion of the style of the illumination (4.4). Chapter 5 deals with the structure of the non-figurative illumination, including all initials other than the historiated (5.1), and the border decoration (5.2). In addition, the function of the illumination with regard to the textual hierarchy is discussed here (5.3).

In chapter 6 a hypothesis is offered concerning the origin of the manuscripts (6.1 and 6.2). Furthermore, a separate section (6.3) is dedicated to a so far unknown Book of Hours that sheds some new light upon the organization of book production in the Northern Netherlands at the end of the fifteenth century. To complete the story of the manuscripts, as far as possible an account is given of their fifteenth and sixteenth-century owners (6.4).

In addition to the main text, seven appendices have been included that deal with issues raised in the chapters concerned.

The most important question addressed in this book is that of the origin of the manuscripts. In searching for clues that could help to answer this problem, both within the manuscripts and in external sources such as archives, material has been found that not only provides us with the most probable localization of the Sarijs manuscripts, but that also sheds an altogether new light on book production in the Northern Netherlands in the late Middle Ages.

The principal clue for localization in the manuscripts themselves is the style of their decoration, which is that of the so-called Zwolle Masters. These artists are named after the monumental six-volume Bible that was written and most probably decorated as well in St Gregory's House, the house of the Brethren of the Common Life in Zwolle.

There are, however, certain obstacles to the location of the Sarijs manuscripts within the workshop of the Brethren. In chapter 1.3 these are dealt with. Especially the fact that all Sarijs manuscripts are in the vernacular is serious argument against an assumed origin in St Gregory's House, given that in the *Consuetudines* the Brethren set themselves the task of copying, as much as possible, Latin texts. Moreover, certain characteristics of the Sarijs manuscripts that the study of the codicological, textual and decorative aspects brings to light, also speak against an origin in the workshop of the Brethren. These are dis-

cussed in the relevant chapters, as well as in chapter 6.1, where an overall characterization of the Sarijs manuscripts is given. One of the most striking features is the large number of writing as well as decorating hands. At least 23 scribes and 16 illuminators can be distinguished, most of whom can be identified in only one or two manuscripts. This is not consistent with the particulars of book production in the chronicle of St Gregory's House: only twelve scribes and four illuminators are known by name, most of whom were living in the House over a considerable period. Moreover, the scribal errors we repeatedly encounter in the Calendar and the Litany are not such as would be made by experienced scribes and practising priests such as (a majority of) the Brethren were; even less would they occur (as they do) in nearly all the manuscripts concerned.

The key to the solution of the problem concerning the origin of the Sarijs manuscripts is offered by the *libri accidentalium* of the Domus Parva, a house situated adjacent to St Gregory's House in Zwolle. Here, students of the famous Latin school of Johannes Cele were housed by the Brethren, who also looked after their needs, both in a material and in a spiritual sense. Two *libri accidentalium* of the Domus Parva remain: books in which one of the Brethren noted all recurrent financial and other transactions that took place between the pupils and the representative of St Gregory's House. The first covers the years 1480-1489, the second the years 1490-1498. For various reasons, the most important being the dating of the Sarijs manuscripts, only the first book has been studied. In the entries no distinction is made between expenditures and receipts. Therefore the question whether the amounts mentioned are sums paid by or paid to the pupils cannot be answered with one hundred percent certainty. There are, however, quite strong indications that most entries concern sums of money paid to the students, to enable them to buy clothes and food or to pay the doctor. The most interesting entries, however, are those concerning books and the production of books. Sometimes a particular kind of book is mentioned: 'pro psalterio (hymnario/orario etc.)'. Other entries speak of a particular activity that is connected with the production of books: 'pro illuminatione', 'pro rubrica', 'pro scriptura libri', 'pro ligatura libri', etc. All in all, over the period 1480-1489, 344 entries are made that concern in one way or another the involvement of students of the Latin school, housed in the Domus Parva, in the production of books; of these, 91 have something to do with Books of Hours. Moreover, on one of the last pages of the book a note is made of the books that were in stock in 1488: *habuimus in libris xlv psalteria et xxv euangelitaria et xx ymnaria et sequenciarum et 1 1/2 c dominus quae pars et 1/2 c boecij libros et xl oraria*.

It is very likely that the production of books in the Domus Parva took place on the initiative of the Brethren of St Gregory's House. They had the means, both technical and financial, to promote production on so large a scale. Besides, the workshop of the Brethren was of high

renown, as is witnessed not only by the commission of the six-volume Bible by a Utrecht dean but also by a hitherto unknown Book of Hours, written and decorated with penwork in the Thabor monastery in Friesland but illuminated with painted decoration (six historiated initials, one dentelle initial and borders) by someone who worked in the style of the Zwolle Masters. In this Book of Hours, the name of the brother who should put in the painted decoration (*gulden litteren*) is mentioned several times: 'frater Henricus', who in all probability was a resident of either St Gregory's House or the Domus Parva. In chapter 6.3, this so-called Thabor manuscript is discussed at some length.

On the basis of the characteristics of the Sarijs manuscripts and of our knowledge of the organization of book production in St Gregory's House and the adjacent Domus Parva, the hypothesis is offered that the Sarijs manuscripts were among the books (partly) produced in the Domus Parva (6.2). This hypothesis not only accounts for the peculiarities of the manuscripts but also provides us with a fairly large group of manuscripts, mostly Books of Hours, that could very well have been produced, at least partly, in the Domus Parva. On the one hand, the decoration clearly points to a workshop in or at least very close to St Gregory's House; on the other, there are the conspicuous mistakes in the Calendar that would not have been made by the Brethren but that are consistent with the idea that the scribes and possibly the illuminators of most of the Sarijs manuscripts were the students housed in the Domus Parva. They were not as acquainted with the liturgical calendar as the Brethren were, nor were they as experienced in the art of copying.

Even if it cannot be proved beyond a doubt that the Sarijs manuscripts were part of the stock held by the Domus Parva in 1488, it remains a fact that the situation as we can deduce it from the *liber accidentalium* is quite remarkable in the Northern Netherlandish circumstances. As Peter Gumbert has pointed out on the basis of dated manuscripts, in the Northern Netherlands, as compared to other urbanized areas in Western Europe, there was an undoubted preponderance of monastically produced manuscripts. As a result of the information in the *liber accidentalium* this proposition can at the very least be somewhat modified. Besides, we now know for a fact that in this period of expansion, not only printed books but handwritten books as well were produced for stock.